



Tower Hamlets

# Class Struggle

A Workers' Liberty education workers' bulletin

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## Work-to-rule should escalate to strikes!



By a teacher

**In the NUT's recent ballot on pay, workload and jobs, 93% voted in favour of action short of strike action and 83% in favour of strike action.**

As a result, NUT and NASUWT have jointly launch a workload campaign to enable teachers to take back some control over our daily working lives. As of 3 October, members of both unions will be legally entitled to follow the 25 instructions jointly issued and refuse certain duties ranging from submitting short term planning for monitoring to participating in mock OFSTED inspections.

The idea is not to damage the quality of education we provide for our students, but to assert ourselves as active stakeholders and reclaim our right to act with integrity within our work.

We must be allowed to do what needs to be done to teach effectively, rather than jumping through the hoops of a system that is increasingly intent on pressurising and bullying teachers until we crack.

The union has sent a strong message, but it will be left up to the confidence and strength of school groups and indi-

vidual members to determine how far this action goes. It is vital that we make the struggle collective wherever possible, building links that will support more isolated members and groups.

The union must be prepared to back up its words with strike action in response to headteachers refusing to accept the action (or victimising members who push it forward) if this campaign is going to achieve anything.

The work-to-rule is termed as "phase one". As yet, we have no hint of what "phase two" might look like. But we know that if we are serious about taking on a system that is bent on punishing teachers and failing working-class students, then serious, coordinated strikes will be necessary.

Members of both unions need to be prepared to escalate this action on workload and must be calling on the leaderships of NUT and NASUWT to escalate it quickly and properly.

**The Local Associations Network, established by grassroots activists in the NUT frustrated with the union leaders' collapse and surrender in the pensions dispute, aims to help teachers share information and develop and enact a strategy that might actually enable us to win not only the daily battles we have with SMTs but a better future for teachers and the students we teach.**

• More info: Local Associations Network,  
[www.nutlan.org.uk](http://www.nutlan.org.uk)



Workers' Liberty is a revolutionary socialist organisation active in the British labour movement fighting for an alternative to capitalism and Stalinism based on common ownership, democracy and workers' control. *Class Struggle* is produced by our members, supporters and friends who work in education in Tower Hamlets. To get involved with producing the bulletin, or to take copies for your workplace, email [awl@workersliberty.org](mailto:awl@workersliberty.org) with the subject line 'Tower Hamlets Class Struggle'.



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## Bishop Challoner teachers reject “M-OFSTED”

**Last week, NUT and NASUWT members at Bishop Challoner, in a packed joint meeting, voted unanimously not to cooperate with a mock OFSTED inspection (“M-OFSTED”), planned in October.**

A M-OFSTED contains all the usual discomfort of an OFSTED — inspectors with questionable judgement, reams of lesson plans, stressed teachers, and wasted hours better spent on teaching and learning — with the added obscenity of costing the school somewhere in the region of £35,000 (a teacher's annual salary). Which would you rather have?

This vote has not come out of the blue. Members have been experiencing continual management attacks for the last year, with frequent abusive comments about their commitment to the students' educational development and their own professional capacity launched in whole school staff meetings and in menacing “quiet little chats”.

Staff turnover has increased. Workload, SLT drop-ins, and stress have rocketed in an atmosphere of fear, where members felt isolated and powerless. With this vote, the culture seems to be changing.

The unions have asked the Head to cancel the M-OFSTED, but have yet to hear a response. If she refuses, members will vote on strike action. Members are currently discussing what other action short of strike action they want to take, and what other pointless activities like M-OFSTED can be done away with. And what will teachers do instead? Their job: teaching.

**Who knows... some of them might also use the time they would've spent in this pointless inspection to develop a more even work-life balance.**



## Build for 20 October: fight for a workers' government!

**The 20 October TUC demonstration, now less than a month away, is a chance to send a spectacular message to the government — a message of opposition, of disaffection, of discontent.**

The demonstration should be a platform to amplify and build solidarity for ongoing industrial disputes, like the NUT/NASUWT work-to-rule, and articulate a positive political message — a radical, working-class socialist alternative to the coalition's austerity project.

For teachers, the demo will be a chance to link up with others teachers from different schools and areas and march together. It will be an opportunity to discuss the ongoing action, and possible escalation to strikes.

Unison members in Higher Education are in dispute over pay, construction workers are fighting blacklisting and victimisation, and Argos workers are resisting pensions cuts.

Workers from local disputes in other industries — such as Tube cleaners, Tyne & Wear Metro cleaners, London Midland and East Coast cleaners, Amey workers and others — can also have visible contingents. Workers from on-

going strikes and disputes should be given the platform on 20 October. If the TUC restricts its platform to union big-wigs, grassroots union activists should organise alternative platforms where striking workers can tell their stories and discuss them with others.

In the run-up to the demo, on the demo itself, and beyond, activists should fight for our unions to develop and campaign for a workers' plan — not vague platitudes like the demo's meaningless headline demand “for a future that works”, but a comprehensive set of policies for putting working-class interests ahead of the needs of profit. These demands would include expropriating the vast wealth of the banking and finance sector and taking it into democratic, public ownership.

Of course, no Tory, Lib Dem or likely Labour government would enact such policies.

**So we also need to fight for our unions to develop a perspective for working-class government — a government that is as much by, of, and for working-class people as the current government is by, of, and for the rich.**